

Plight Of Women and Nature in Anita Desai's The Fire on The Mountain

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ABSTRACT

Many research scholars have explored different aspects of Anita Desai's multifaceted writing. "They include areas such as feminist approach, the philosophical approach and psychological one. Anita Desai is an expert in dealing with the lonely experience of the women characters. In *Fire on the Mountain* (1977)," her journey moves from adulthood to old age experiences of the protagonist Nanda Kaul. The content investigates how harsh **practices connected to patriarchal society work powerfully on degrees of climate and gender**. It sends a deft designing of zoological, botanical, atmospheric and color imagery to pass on the representative centrality of the account and the assorted analogies of the more obscure shades of nature and the hazier parts of femaleness. She presents the picture of a suffering woman engrossed with her inward world, her pouting dissatisfaction and the tempest inside; the existential problem of a woman in a male dominated society. She not just features the quiet agonies, pain, desolation and weakness of women who are tortured by everyday issues, except quietly makes the examination of the circumstance in this way improving it for the perusers to reach to the main driver of the issue. In postcolonial Indian society, women are viewed as simple "objects" and "others." As a main figure of the 20th century Indo-Anglican fiction, Anita Desai holds a dream of feminism that tends to the showdown of women against patriarchal mistreatment. In the vast majority of her novels, working class women in contemporary India endeavor to conquer cultural restrictions forced by male centric society. Desai varies from different women's activists as she underscores singular salvation through self-investigation and inspiration. This Article analyzes the perception of women through Anita Desai's Novel "The Fire on the Mountain".

Keywords: Women, Nature, Existence, Suffering, Pain, patriarchy, Anita Desai, The Fire on the Mountain, Feminism, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The novels of Anita Desai have been examined from several viewpoints, particularly formalist and artistic. Desai is probably the most experienced artist of all Indian authors of English literature. As if writing comes to her only as effortlessly as breathing, she works deliberately, laboriously and deeply to place a template on the messy raw material of life. She finds writing to be a discovery of the facts. This reality remains buried mainly under the surfaces of what people see, say and do. Anita Desai has worked quite carefully with psychological truth in her novels. She needs to compose and find herself and then express the facts esthetically. She has sought to explore the depths of the mind of a woman and demonstrate her link with society. And the picture of the neurotic, including Maya and Sita, will draw this fear. In their intensive periods of struggle and attempts to discover neurotic remedies, these two

women present sensitive persons. Anita Desai is commonly regarded as a leader of contemporary Indian English literature on psychological novels. Anita Desai, without a doubt, is the leading Indian feminist novelist. With her poignant, hypersensitive awareness, her scholarship and her inner psychological strength regarding the natural and real existence of family, social and economic relations which were minutely influenced in her main books. Her books reflect fundamental feminism. Desai has revealed through her novels both the grim and enigmatic reality of human psychology, particularly the questions of women, in most of her postmodern-day novels. As a self-conceived social critic and reformer, Desai has spread the unheard pictures of her age's lower and despised people. Feminism is one of the most significant topics of her futuristic world; she's depicted a model of the whole female population to promote the second sex message. She has presented her novel with feminine emotions and colorful, creative, and future topics in terms of the wretched, hard condition of the poorer working class of the rare affliction of people, agony and psychological senses of confrontation in the unconscious and unwise, wives, fathers and brothers. Desai tried to underline the matriarchical war, equality, and self-identity and self-power toward the masculine world, in which the feminist discourse has become universalized with an inward gaze. Desai seeks to examine the sensation and lively expressionism of women in the field of literature, but she is unable to feel herself as a self-conscious feminist artist.

FEMINISM AND FEMINIST WRITINGS

Feminism is not a science or philosophy; it has no belief or doctrine, no connection to realities or rationality, wrote Kunjakkan (2002)¹ in simple terms it is as “a movement ‘of women, by women, and for women’ to achieve women’s rights”. Feminism stands for gender equality to eradicate domination, discrimination and subordination. It symbolizes major changes and transforms society - both social and political, as feminism thoroughly questions the understanding of men, women and social structure which maintains the difference (Kunjakkan 2002).

Some feminists like Hirsch and Keller (1990)² argued that feminism itself is not a unitary ideal for them, Feminism, like theory, is an activity that would only be imagined as unified and seamless under the illusion of a governing ideal.... But it is no improvement to displace one governing ideal by several disparate ideals of ‘woman’ or ‘truth’.

Indian culture and literature allude the most established and most prominent among the world. In India, there are clear cultural and dialects spoken by the general population. dialects perceived as official dialects in India. Simon De Beauvoir mentioned about women that Female characters are not through their introduction to the world but rather they are made'. This sentence of Simon is exceptionally productive and says such huge numbers of things and actualities about women's condition and circumstance in this world. The present century alludes to the movement of feminism in which found the awareness of woman and their education and circumstance and their rights. There are different floods of women's activist movement in which including nineteenth century's and twentieth century's waves and in the support of feminism. Indian culture and literature allude the most established and most prominent among the world. In India, there are clear social and languages spoken by the general population. languages perceived as official languages in India. The hypothesis of feminism has constrained space of history in India. In India, male centric power exists since ever.

INDIAN FEMINISM

The current era of feminism which has popped during the 1960s is turning a movement of socio politics that strives to draw an understanding on the society's power structure, the domination of male, social institutions and practices, corresponding agendas and laws that have been instrumental when assigning women marginalization. The theory of feminism lays down the tactics to alter the social structure which aid the emancipation of women. A critic named, Chaman Nahal has observed feminism basic concept as: *"I would define feminism to be the existence mode where a woman is given freedom from the dependence syndrome. A syndrome of dependence could be the father, husband, a community or the religious group. After a woman sets her free from the syndrome of dependence leading a general life, the concept of feminism then materializes."* It is seen that feminism evolves out of the women liberalization need to dominate women having the view to acquire a position of respect in the society. Also, feminism is an equality struggle deeming women to be equally secured as compared to men. A struggle against the sexist and the patriarchal forms being indicated in the definitions above.

A literary concept, Feminism has spread worldwide. The phenomenon is universal as it can be noticed in all the culture, countries, religion and races. A rising awareness is seen to grow in the women of twentieth century pertaining to the sexuality, desires, existence, self-definition, and destiny. Efforts of women to gain identity and independence have seen to revolutionize the world that as coined by analyst is the term 'Feminism'. As per Janet Richards, *"Feminism essence is a case fundamental and is directed to women stating there exist multiple reasons as to the suffering of a woman is solely due to gender and this proposition is feminism."*¹⁴ for some, feminism on a whole is the liberation movement of human along with the movement undertaken by a women for the women and encourages the society to hold the view of women being a human. An interpretation by Eisenstein states feminism or feminist to be as *"According to my understanding on the term 'feminist' is a elementary vision of the futurist thoughts. The above then encompasses the social transformation concept which as the subset of the women eventual liberation due to human relationship changes is done for a better outcome...Feminism focuses on the changes in men and socially."* Feminism is all about seeing women as the normal being and also respect their issue's, demand and dream.

Feminism in India is the outcome of western feminism. Indian feminism accounts for movements that aim to define establish and further defend rights equal in all political spheres with equal opportunity and social rights to aid economic progress in comparison to the male counterparts. This could be thought as the Indian women pursuit which hell them attain a place respectable in male centric society. Similar to the feminist counterparts across the world, Indian feminists strive to attain gender equality. Demands made by them include: equal access to health, equal wages, equal education, and similar political rights. Situation existing in India can be the opposite of the Western society as there orientation of market, consumerism, and varied system of value has an impact on the women position, but women in India has been kept safe in all patterns of Western society. And during the same time, several suffering from varied axis like Brahmanical ideology, patriarchal values, traditionalism, purity-pollution concepts, caste system and identifying them as the weaker sex. Women's long and painful sufferings, the fight to attain equal pay, and right to abort and the birth control practices are few among the elements of inequality of gender which Indian women fights for. Indian women face hierarchy in her family as sex, age, the ordinal position, and in a community as the relationship between works of caste and inter-caste.

Desai in this novel portrays the inner psychological conflict of an old lady, Nanda Kaulas she lives a life of dissatisfaction and was never able to enjoy her married life. She is seeing an extra marital affair of her

husband with his colleague. Nanda wants to be alone, away from her meaningless life. The ongoing mental conflict is being presented by Desai. It was published in 1977. "Life with the Deputy Chancellor was a long time without any affection attached to it except to the duties and obligations of her position. Her greedy, unfaithful spouse, who treated her simply as a useful thing, disillusioned her. Her husband, who always wanted her in silk at the head of a long table rosewood, in the dining room entertaining his guests, always played the gracious hostess all the time. Gopal N.R. says, She is so engaged in raising the family and fulfilling the duties of mother and hostess that she is happy to remain secluded on the evening of her day, even if it is partly voluntary and partly circumstantial. Mrs. Desai sets an example of Nand Kaul's troublesome life. Outside of the university Kauls were an ideal partner, but everything was vacant inside, the whole of sociality was simply a shame." Her life was lack of composition and harmony with her husband.

PLIGHT OF WOMEN AND NATURE IN ANITA DESAI'S "THE FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN"

This book reflects largely on the silence and loneliness and the ensuing anguish and agony in an elderly widow's desert life. The novel describes the story of a hamlet in Carignano, Nanda Kaul, a solitary and haunted house in the town, far from the town. He starts off with Nanda Kaul who, after the demise of her marriage, almost left the planet and wished to remain happily in Kausali amidst the hills and pinecones. Asha's news of Raka, her granddaughter's arrival, disturbs Nanda Kaul's quiet solitude, an irritating text. She hopes to stay away from civilization with the sudden advent of Raka in her life. She no longer desires to be interested with certain responsibilities, and in Carignano she just needs to be alone. But the letter of Asha made her apprehensive and sadly reflected on her.

"Of bags and letters, messages and demands...she had wanted to be left to the pines and cicadas alone... Whatever else came or happened would be an unwelcomed intrusion and distraction".

The great-grand child of Nanda Kaul, Raka, is visiting her to support her. Since her parents told the wild, quiet and painful Nanda that their marriage had failed. "If Raka makes the wilderness house, social pressure is seen to have profound impact on the conception itself of the home and failed marriage. It can be a natural women's shelter. In Desai's novels female protagonists have their social identification connected to home and home, but the very notion of 'safe' is denied – because 'home' in Desai's literature becomes a trap for women and children. The author's psychological test can also be used in Raka's character representation of the book. The parent-child interaction plays a significant role in psychology, and the pattern of feelings arises in children in particular. They claim that, in fact, the early childhood consistency of the child's experience with his parents is crucial. In the company of his relatives, who are the first people with whom the infant communicates, childhood is the most shaping stage of one's identity and socializing in the family. In order to render him an appropriate part of community, Cheld discovers the habits of conduct that parents want to show him. The child's emotion primarily relies on how much the child and his parents communicate with their emotion. Strangely childlike characters of Anita Desai lead to their unable to create, and sustain harmonious interpersonal partnerships in the later life, their perceptions and interactions in this formative time, when coupled with their congenital hypersensitivity." She reflected on the upbringing of her sad and introspective character

"I agree that the experiences of childhood are the most vivid and lasting ones."

The mountain's terrain – rugged and desolate – evokes the psychological loneliness of the lady. In her apathy she desires to obtain her granddaughter is her lonely and alienated dream. "She groaned, unload

me. All my responsibilities I've discharged. Unloading." Carignano brought her the privacy and escapes on which she wished. Mrinalini Solunki observed correctly:

“Her option for total isolation is not related to the spirituality of Indian thought. She does not opt for this isolation willingly, but circumstances have left no other way out for her. Her long involvement with the people and the affairs of the world gave her neither satisfaction nor a sense of belongingness. Therefore, in a bid to survive she opts for withdrawal, for an existence away from the world of messages and visitors”

The novel talks of the lie Nanda are compelled to do. Her married life wasn't peaceful. Not all was passion and honesty, but her husband's hideous treachery guided her to a life of secrecy. “The kids were overseas. The graces and glories are a produce that contributed to the present. She did not include her inner self in her relationship with her husband. The book offers her husband a feeling of satisfaction, but on the last page of the novel, the entire tale is a white lie. The friendship between Raka's mom and her excessive beer and abusive father is another failed matrimonial relations house in a book. But the writer concentrated on the pain of Nanda Kaul whom her husband tricks and betrays. Anita Desai is protested against miserable domestic life in the universe of phoneies by her woman's identities. The lack of understanding of the partner's expectations and temperaments is mainly responsible for the marital disagreement of Ms. Kaul.

Anita Desai is struggling with the loneliness of her three protagonists, Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila Das, in *Fire on the Mountains* (1977). This is a book, not a typical one, but firmly embedded in a certain space and period. The story finishes in the remote Himalayan town of Kasauli within a few summer days. The general panorama of the lives of the protagonists in this brief time is either in the speech of the writers or in the thoughts of the characters themselves. Time does not pass in a sequential forward progression,” but continuous parallels to the past remain. R. S. Sharma states correctly:

Nanda Kaul unconsciously seeks to freeze Time into a motionless constancy, but time keeps moving through her past which she recapitulates as she reacts to her present surroundings. (Sharma)³

Therefore, intrinsic time flows independently of time, however, it does not absolutely root in itself since it still relies on the inductivity of artifacts and pictures from the external universe. *Fire on the mountain* is structurally separated into three parts that each deal with a single case. I titled *Nanda Kaul* in Carignano via the ten chapters of Section. “It is shown that Nanda Kaul floats between the past and the present as the future arrives in the form of a letter that declares an unwelcome grandchild. Section II, the longest one, consisting of 21 pages, is dedicated to the appearance and residence of Raka at Carignano. The denouement also contains Section III, which discusses in some depth the tour of Ila Das, Nanda Kaul's childhood friend. It is necessary to remember that Section III concludes with the numerical connotations of doom and tragedy in thirteen chapters. The period for both characters was unkind and catastrophic. Nanda Kaul has lived her life doing what she demanded of herself and her futility, as she is pessimistic and embittered as a wife and mother. When she was very advanced, she was freed from the slavery of the busy wife of the vice-chancellor, and then she pursued a life of utter loneliness and inactivity with vengeance.” In the last pages, though, we know that she has no choice yet - because she didn't survive by choice here alone - because she stayed here alone since she was obligated to do that.

The novel comes to an end with the darkness on the stage. The rape and killing of Ila and the death of Nanda Kaul are very brutal. The lowering of the sun thus implies the arrival of death and night is the appropriate moment for morbid events. Several artifacts and pictures that function for the protagonists as an immediate cue shape an intrinsic part of this book.

CONCLUSION

Fire on the mountain demonstrates the degree to which contact with children influences them and motivates them to connect to others. Raka, however, is a lone born. “She’s a broken house survivor. Owing to the odd situations surrounding her, she becomes an introvert. The uncertainty in life has been seen enough and the bitterness, mistrust and aggression have been seen. Raka is an emotionally deprived survivor. Her pretty shame fills her heart with suspicion and mistrust. As a consequence, it turns it back on humans and its so-called healthy and civilized existence and is deeply intrigued with nature’s ugly, solitary, resilient and barren features. Women’s position is a little paradoxical in modern India. If she is at the height of her performance, on the one hand, she lives silent the abuse her family members are suffering from. In modern times, women have accomplished a lot relative to the past, yet they have traveled a long way in fact. Its route is lined with roadblocks.” The women have left their home guarded and are now completely armored for their skills in the field of living. You showed yourself. But they still have their dues in India.

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